

Sheehan's syndrome

Definition: Sheehan syndrome (i.e. postpartum hypopituitarism) is a rare but potentially life-threatening complication. The pituitary gland is enlarged in pregnancy and prone to infarction from hypovolemic shock. **Damage to the pituitary can be mild or severe, and can affect the secretion of one, several, or all of its hormones.** A common presentation is a combination of failure to lactate post-delivery and amenorrhea or oligomenorrhea, but any of the manifestations of hypopituitarism (e.g. hypotension, hyponatremia, hypothyroidism) can occur any time from the immediate postpartum period to years after delivery. If the patient remains hypotensive after control of hemorrhage and volume replacement, she should be evaluated and treated for adrenal insufficiency immediately; evaluation of other hormonal deficiencies can be deferred until four to six weeks postpartum

Other complications of post-partum hemorrhage include: death, hypovolemic shock, fluid overload, abdominal compartment syndrome, anemia, transfusion-related complications, ARDS, anesthesia-related complications, sepsis, venous thrombosis, unplanned need for hysterectomy, Asherman syndrome

Question:

A 23 year-old female remains hypotensive after delivery of a term baby boy despite hemorrhage control and adequate fluid resuscitation. The finding that best explains this is:

- a. Elevated TSH level
- b. Abdominal compartment syndrome
- c. Asherman syndrome
- d. Adrenal insufficiency

Answer: D - If the patient remains hypotensive after control of hemorrhage and volume replacement, she should be evaluated and treated for adrenal insufficiency immediately